

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND CHARLES COLSON ON JANUARY 5, 1973, FROM 12:02
TO 1:02 P.M.

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BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CHARLES COLSON ON
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(Noise)

COLSON: And that's when that week he's going to New York. He'll probably drop by tomorrow.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

COLSON: Well, that letter is a very substantive.

PRESIDENT: He doesn't write letters like that. (Unintelligible) before, when I supported his God-damned vote scheme

COLSON: Mmm.

PRESIDENT: ...the first time. No, he never does anything(unintelligible).

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: And frankly, I would be for it. I think he's gonna, I think he's gonna talk to me about-- maybe his relationship (unintelligible). Maybe the Post. If it's the Post, we'll hardline the hell out of 'em. (Unintelligible). Correct?

COLSON: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: on the other hand, you gotta represent it that-- you could--just say that you're leaving and th-, th-, th-, th-, they've broken their (unintelligible).

COLSON: Yeah. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: I know (unintelligible). He, uh, he wouldn't say that (unintelligible). He's a...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: ...That you know that the word is around this town. He's sent out a lot of signals, and, uh,--more than we realized, I think.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's, uh...

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COLSON: (Unintelligible). The Star this evening has the whole story about this proposed litigation playing it up (unintelligible), respect to Nixon, IRS, (unintelligible). (Phone rings)

COLSON: The whole story. (Unintelligible) IRS.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah. I'll be 15 minutes late for the haircut (unintelligible). Take somebody else. Five thirty, I forgot five forty-five. (Unintelligible). (Hangs up)

COLSON: (Unintelligible) a lawyer from Arnold & Porter called, uh, the lawyer handling the case and said that--handling the case against (unintelligible/REMOVED). (Unintelligible/REMOVED). (Unintelligible//REMOVED) said--the lawyer handling this--said we're out to get this guy. This guy is (unintelligible/REMOVED). (Unintelligible/REMOVED). So they're up there. This fellow (unintelligible/REMOVED)...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/REMOVED). I hope they catch (unintelligible/REMOVED). And if they do have somebody else in line.

COLSON: Oh, they will. Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I want somebody else just as tough.

COLSON: (Unintelligible/REMOVED) quite as tough but--they won't get 'em. I don't think. (Unintelligible/REMOVED).

PRESIDENT: Has he.

COLSON: (Unintelligible) in Washington this week. (Unintelligible) this book she's written on (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/REMOVED).

COLSON: (Unintelligible/REMOVED).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/REMOVED).

COLSON: (Unintelligible/REMOVED). The point is they're beginning to see what the hell they're doing. And that kind of a message is (unintelligible/REMOVED)...

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PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: ...(unintelligible/**REMOVED**) share some clients with you (unintelligible) cause we can't handle 'em. Shapiro went to--Shapiro went to law school with (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah. What'd he say?

COLSON: Two words.

PRESIDENT: Hell, no.

COLSON: (Unintelligible). (Laughs)

PRESIDENT: Good.

COLSON: (Laughs) (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Good.

COLSON: (Unintelligible). (Laughs) Share some clients. Try that. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Never, never, never.

COLSON: No. No.

PRESIDENT: No way.

COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

PRESIDENT: Incidentally, I, uh, I told this--I told Henry, er, Ron, I saw Rogers (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). I must say, both of those fellows are headline material.

COLSON:

PRESIDENT: **RESTRICTED-"B"**

COLSON:

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PRESIDENT:

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PRESIDENT:

(Cont 'd)

COLSON:

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PRESIDENT:

The other thing is of course,
is that...

COLSON: Maybe (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: I don't think, Chuck. I don't think there's
that much else uproar in the god-damn
country about this stuff.

COLSON: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Henry said that his man said there isn't
that much mail (unintelligible). Carl
Albert (unintelligible) a lot of mail he
got. And he said the, he said the mail is
very light on the (unintelligible).

COLSON: Carl Albert (unintelligible) the speaker
gets the organized mail.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

COLSON: See the

PRESIDENT: They know who to write.

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COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Go up to Scranton, (unintelligible), Pittsburgh, and (unintelligible). They're not affected by it. Obviously they're not dancing in the streets (unintelligible). But particularly to stop.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

COLSON: The dead issue.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) going on, a hell of a lot of people were for it. And a lot were against it, we know. About half and half.

COLSON: Well we got--actually we got a--similar stuff. We got about forty percent for (unintelligible) percent against.

PRESIDENT: Right.

COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

PRESIDENT: But you see what happened--I told him, I told Henry, I said look (unintelligible) and Bob Haldeman and, Ehrlichman (unintelligible) this thing is getting a huge waste of effort the last few days. But it's not the question of the God damn Congress. The Congress is back. The Congress is in the news. So, the Congress goes out and he acts about Vietnam. Why do they do it? The Democrats do it cause they're deeply divided (unintelligible). Why do the Republicans do it--the independents? Republicans are frustrated cause they didn't win. And, uh, so they, uh, they just (unintelligible). I don't know. But...

COLSON: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Is Ford's outfit doing anything today or (unintelligible).

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

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PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).
COLSON: (Unintelligible).
PRESIDENT: Too late.
COLSON: No, I don't think so.
PRESIDENT: Uh, at any rate
COLSON: Ford, Ford was the first to bring it up, but I thought (unintelligible).
PRESIDENT: Right.
COLSON: If you can (unintelligible/**REMOVED**).
PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).
COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) it's a very difficult (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). They thought they had always (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). And he said, "(unintelligible/**REMOVED**)."
(Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).
PRESIDENT: Yeah.
COLSON: I didn't want (unintelligible)
PRESIDENT: The Hawks don't want, uh, uh (unintelligible) explanation from the President on this?
COLSON: on the Administration.
PRESIDENT: The Administration. About why we'd done it.
COLSON: Yeah.
PRESIDENT: At that point, (unintelligible). What do--how do we answer that?
COLSON: Well we can't do it. No.
PRESIDENT: We can't do it publicly.
COLSON: No.
PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) said that he, that he's (unintelligible).

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COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). The best explanation of all. is the one you just gave. You just said, "They were welching onto (unintelligible/**REMOVED**)."
(Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) in Life and Time magazine. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).
(Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) us military action.

PRESIDENT:

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COLSON:

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COLSON:

(Cont'd)

RESTRICTED-"B"

PRESIDENT:

COLSON:

PRESIDENT:

(on telephone)

Yeah. What? Fine. Uh, Henry, uh, yeah--I'd like for you--and I'm gonna leave here in about ten minutes--if you could save five minutes for Colson, he's got one idea he would like to talk over with you, okay? Uh, he could come--he'll be there at a quarter till. How's that for you? Uh, you call as soon as he's back (unintelligible). Fine. I mean, I don't want you to stay, uh, uh,--he's free. He says you'll wait for whenever you're ready. Around 6:15 (unintelligible). Fine, 6:15 is fine. Fine. And you just, uh, you call in as soon as you're ready. And, uh, okay.

(hangs up)

Talk to him about it. See whether he thinks-he has so little confidence in Rogers' and Laird's discretion in (unintelligible). (Unintelligible) he's terribly concerned about the baby he's nursing at the present time and I understand that.

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PRESIDENT: But on the other hand, I would like to see
(Cont'd) some of that get out. I don't know how the hell
it'll get out Scalli got it out. What did
Scalli say?

COLSON: Scalli was--because, because the issue was not--
the public kind of issue is (unintelligible).
(Unintelligible) and by the way, I don't agree
with him but it is (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Congress was not consulted, but they were
advised.

COLSON: And (unintelligible) they think that we're,
we're holding something back. And the way to
get around that is say, "We're not holding
something back. We're not trying to exclude the
Congress. But we're in negotiations: when you're
in negotiations, they (unintelligible) be
secret, but they can't be, because
(unintelligible) anything you say, any, any
interpretation (unintelligible). Therefore, I
just wanna tell you face to face that that's why
we haven't consulted (unintelligible)."
(Unintelligible). You said that. The thing
that they're mad at is that they can't take
(unintelligible). (Unintelligible) the courtesy
of a (unintelligible) and, uh, Henry made a
mistake. I saw the whole thing.
(Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: And that turns it off, right there.

PRESIDENT: Except for the (unintelligible).

COLSON: Except for the loyalists and the
(unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). Well, it's a passing thing.
It'll, it'll go. we're just gonna have to
survive it. I'm sorry about the loyalists.

COLSON: You know...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

COLSON: (Unintelligible) they just, they just, they
just-- their argument is that

PRESIDENT: We need a,--yeah.

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COLSON: ... "You can trust us." It's that kind of point.

PRESIDENT: Henry didn't tell Fulbright. He didn't tell (unintelligible) and he didn't tell Percy. That's the point.

COLSON: You see what happens. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). And the reason was Percy got up and and said--first of all Percy made a motion (unintelligible). But the main thing he said, "I talked to Henry Kissinger, and he said, 'Sure. Things are going along very well (unintelligible).'" And that's it.

PRESIDENT: Why did the Hawks (unintelligible)?

COLSON: 'Cause Percy got up and said I talked to Henry Kissinger.

PRESIDENT: And they--are the Hawks against it?

COLSON: Yeah. They just said well, (unintelligible) Percy's motion. We want our own motion. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: But in the end, they had to had a unanimous motion.

COLSON: It wasn't unanimous.

PRESIDENT: I had some impression it was. No, no--I felt that-- what did they do, they voted against Percy's motion, then voted against any motion?

COLSON: No. They voted against Percy motion (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) senile old man is carrying the gavel. Hit the gavel (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). It was a disaster, but (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) because it was reported they voted a vote of confidence.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Percy has had (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). But that's--but--we (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). But I think we have...

PRESIDENT: ...have somebody else explain to 'em. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

COLSON: I can't (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

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PRESIDENT: True. You tell, uh, I think you should tell Henry these problems with (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Then just, "Well, Henry, it'd be damned helpful if you could just, uh, (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) reassurance or something."

COLSON: All they needed to know was that (unintelligible). They very seldom do. I said (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: No. They want to be told something else. They want to be told (unintelligible). That's correct. But I,--that I can't tell them. That's the point of it anyway.

COLSON: They'll settle for less. They'll settle for (unintelligible). Anything you say now could jeopardize you. It's a waiting thing and, and, (unintelligible). (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I think sending out (unintelligible). The Congress--the second problem is the Congress made news the last two days because the God damn Congress (unintelligible). Now the Congress won't make news on this tomorrow because they (unintelligible).

COLSON: As of today.

PRESIDENT: As of today. So they won't --the Congress won't (unintelligible). Tomorrow they're gonna have--we'll make the news.

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: At least, uh, at the worst, uh, they'll, uh, they'll try to jab us on this God damn thing. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). I'll bet we're the (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) I'm the one that has to be prepared to say (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Here's the real problem where H-Henry needs Scalli. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Scalli could say (unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

COLSON: Well, Henry

PRESIDENT: Sensitive to what the policy (unintelligible). I was thinking about that piece about the damage in

PRESIDENT: South Vietnam, and I've asked
(Cont'd) (unintelligible)hospitals, orphanages,
schools, etc. destroyed by the
(unintelligible). Get my point? Delivered
as a matter off policy, uh, so you get a
hold of Colonel Kennedy, and, uh--you know
what I mean. The double standard. Our,
our-

COLSON:

PRESIDENT: **RESTRICTED-"B"**

COLSON: You know (unintelligible). You know the
double standard. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

PRESIDENT: All right. Good.

COLSON: We'll get-more of that.

PRESIDENT: Do your best.

COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).
(11 second pause)

PRESIDENT: You know I took (unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Without intending for it to come out that
way.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Huh?

COLSON: I know you didn't. You care about
(unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). Well, even if so, we can
get nothing across (unintelligible). The
damn thing comes out our way. That's what
really matters.

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COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Just irritating.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I'm getting a little tired of him. I really am. (Unintelligible). Do you think we could get a little mail out in support of us.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Isn't it about time we got a little of that stand by the President (unintelligible).

COLSON: It would help, uh,...

PRESIDENT: I don't know whether (unintelligible). (Unintelligible).

COLSON: (Unintelligible) so far our people want to talk (unintelligible) not running around. They think you're doing great.

PRESIDENT: But they're not concerned about it. See they're not like the Congress--they're not concerned about not being told why.

COLSON: Oh, hell no.

PRESIDENT: The Congress--is just a question of (unintelligible) you know the interesting thing (unintelligible) the other day (unintelligible). You know, there's a lot of people (unintelligible). (Unintelligible). The War wasn't really an issue (unintelligible). That's the line (unintelligible) was trying to get out. You know what I mean. But basically it was (unintelligible) lost because (unintelligible). Now the War was the clear cut issue of this campaign.

COLSON: Anyhow, the war is over.

PRESIDENT: The war is over with.

COLSON: Anyone who wanted to vote to go get out of Vietnam with no strings attached, merely had to cast their vote for McGovern.

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PRESIDENT: That's right.

COLSON: Thirty days (unintelligible)
(Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT:

COLSON:

PRESIDENT:

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PRESIDENT:

COLSON: **RESTRICTED-"D"**

PRESIDENT:

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PRESIDENT:

COLSON:

PRESIDENT:

COLSON:

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COLSON: **RESTRICTED-"D"**

PRESIDENT:

COLSON:

PRESIDENT:

COLSON:

PRESIDENT: Don't you think (unintelligible/**REMOVED**)
fortunate enough to get a settlement on our
(unintelligible/**REMOVED**).
(Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) workers and so
forth are gonna look God damn poor.

COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).
(25 second pause)

PRESIDENT:

COLSON: **RESTRICTED-"D"**

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COLSON:

PRESIDENT

COLSON:

PRESIDENT: **RESTRICTED-"B"**

COLSON:

PRESIDENT:

COLSON:

Most people--99 percent of the American people (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) want to get it over with. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**--15 seconds).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

COLSON: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**), I'm not, uh, I'm not that concerned though. I think our problems in the Congress are (unintelligible/**REMOVED**), some way about the country. I don't think. I'm not--I don't think, I don't know, I think we can sense (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). What do you think?

COLSON: Well, we feel it. Well, we always have. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**)...

PRESIDENT: ...(unintelligible/**REMOVED**) after a while (unintelligible/**REMOVED**)

COLSON: I have always (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). People have called me (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) getting all that barrage of calls...

(2 minutes, 20 seconds unintelligible conversation followed by a pause with noise followed by unintelligible conversation./**REMOVED**)